

Christian Order

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Christian Order

EDITED BY

Paul Crane SJ

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Aggression and Peace

THE EDITOR

DOUGLAS HYDE wrote some weeks ago in the *Universe* of a journey by jeep through the mountains that straddle the border between Sarawak, now part of Malaysia, and Indonesia. He spoke of passes over which 1,000 Sarawak Communists had recently gone to establish jungle base camps just inside Indonesian territory. There they are training and waiting over and against the day when they can emulate the example of the Vietcong in South Vietnam. Meanwhile, in Sarawak itself, Hyde told of the discovery by Malaysian security forces of giant hiding places constructed underground by the Communists and containing ammunition, food and medical stores. None of this is news to anyone who has trained himself to the habit, increasingly rare these days, of reading the daily and weekly press with something more than a reasonable degree of intelligence.

For a considerable time now, preparations have been going on to riddle with Communist subversion the whole length of the periphery of the area we know as South-East Asia. I was responsible for the remark when Indonesia ended its confrontation with Malaysia that the troubles of South-East Asia were now just about to begin. By this I meant that Communist guerillas would soon be at work wrecking and killing as in the early days in South Vietnam. Already, in fact, the process has started. In Mao Tse-tung's language, the sea is being made ready for the fish to swim in; the first beginnings are now in train of that process by

which the countryside is intimidated to the point where Communist guerillas can move through it unharmed, living, so to say, on its people. So, in North-East Thailand for example, we have had for more than a year now the infiltration of trained Communists from across the Mekong. The beastliness of sudden butchery has begun, always aimed at village authorities, the object being to deprive the peasants of local leaders in whom they can trust, making of each small community a torso without a head. As local leaders are ruthlessly taken out at village level by torture and death, the peasants of the countryside lose confidence in the ability of government to protect them. They become convinced of the inevitability of Communist conquest and, like most people everywhere under similar circumstances, sign on for safety's sake with what they think of as the forces of victory.

In North-East Thailand the peasants are not far from this signing-on stage. The same may apply soon to those inhabitants of Thailand and the Malayan Peninsula, who live on either side of the frontier between the two countries which runs through the neck of the Kra Isthmus. Increasingly they are at the mercy of five hundred magnificently trained Communist guerillas, the remains of those broken by British forces on the eve of Malaysian independence after years of intensive fighting. These Communists are active again now and they are finely led. They were never completely defeated: now they are getting ready for "der tag". They must be smiling to themselves as Britain's magnificent troops—the core of Malaysian resistance to the Indonesians—complete their long trek home, at the command of a Labour Government so obsessed with the maintenance of material standards that it is as ready even as its Conservative predecessors to shirk its obvious duty rather than see them lowered.

It is, I feel sure, no coincidence that Communist guerillas should have raided a village in Sarawak close to the Indonesian border as British troops were in process of completing the last stages of their withdrawal from a country they had defended so well against external aggression.

Douglas Hyde went to see that village a few days before last Christmas. Let him tell in his own words what he saw:

"After my visit to the frontier, I went to a village which had been raided by Communist guerillas some time ago. They killed nine villagers and a police sergeant who died during an attack on the police station.

"In the now heavily guarded police barracks a sergeant, successor to the one who had been murdered, spread out before me on a table a collection of grim pictures of the bullet-ridden corpses.

"The civilians who had died on the night of the raid included a man, his wife and their eleven-year-old son. One of the parents was, mistakenly, supposed by the Communists to be a government informer.

"He was an innocent peasant who demanded nothing more of life than that he should be left to tend his little pepper garden in peace and get a fair price for his produce at the end of the day.

"The purpose of the raid was to put up a show of strength, intimidate the villagers into supporting the 'cause' and, of course, to acquire arms.

"The corpses were the first fruits of the new fight for 'freedom'."

There you have the start in South-East Asia of what came some years ago to South Vietnam. It represents no more than a spark at present. It may soon be a prairie fire. In the light of the darkening situation in Thailand and Malaysia, what confidence can be placed in the opinion of those who judge that the negotiated withdrawal of American forces from South Vietnam will result in a situation which allows the inhabitants of that country to choose their future in freedom and plan it in peace? Here, too, I believe is a question to which there can be only one answer. If aggression is to cease, the aggressor must put aside his aggressive intent. Until he is made to do so, there can be no peace. This is the lesson of the once peaceful village in Sarawak which, just before Christmas, Douglas Hyde found decimated by brutal Communist attack. It needs careful study by thoughtful men.

Women have a role in the Church, which has too long been denied them, because they have been trained for little else than silent witness, and men have forgotten they were capable of or entitled to anything more.

Women in the Church

MARGARET ROWE

THOSE wonderful men and their computing machines !

From an assembled mass of statistics about motor cars, they have deduced that women's prime desire is to ride in them, whereas men are preoccupied mainly with cleaning and caring for them—and, of course, taking them to pieces. This is what the ad-men term "market research", and it is something any woman could have told them without even being distracted in her calculations about dividing three lamb chops and one small tin of steak by five unexpected guests. After all, it is something we all grew up with, this male obsession for taking things apart. It begins in the cradle when he pulls his feeding bottle to bits. As soon as he is strong enough, he pulls the cradle itself apart. Later his range of activities widens to include father's watch, his first tricycle, the lawn mower, and with the passing years he unscrews the telephone and dismantles radio or television. If he survives these experiments, he finally graduates to the internal combustion engine, where the qualifying test is a mysterious ritual understood only by men, known as "taking off the head".

From this point I must confine myself to untested data drawn only from observation, for this is a delight incomprehensible to the female of the species. When my brothers first succeeded in "taking off the head" they had, seemingly passed to man's estate.Flushed with triumph they stood in the garage surrounded by an infinite variety of nuts, bolts, screws, springs, plugs and wires, with not the vaguest notion how to reassemble them again. This, apparently, was of no consequence. They had achieved the goal, crossed their

Rubicon, and thenceforward were entitled to remark on every possible occasion that they had "taken off the head, you know!" Nobody ever seemed to think it worthwhile asking if they knew how to put the head back on again.

Among my own sex I have encountered nothing equivalent to this strange fascination with anything that can be unscrewed. I never recall having even the faintest urge to take a doll apart in order to find out what made it say "Mama", nor does any adult woman of my acquaintance cherish a passionate curiosity about the works of refrigerators, washing machines or vacuum cleaners. We only ask that these things should work when the appropriate switch is turned on. Of course, we would maintain this is because we have so much more that is worthwhile to do with our time than messing about with greasy intestines of machines. And also, we know perfectly well that should any of these appliances develop strange knocks or belts start flapping, we don't have to wait for a mechanic. We merely turn it upside down and shake it, or if too heavy, give a well-planted kick. Should this fail to right the trouble, we simply mention it casually in conversation to the nearest male, and the response is unfailing. "Have you a screw-driver?" he will ask, his face lighting up with the glow we girls can only produce for mink coats or holidays on the Riviera. But a word of warning: unless you want a man squatting on your kitchen floor for the rest of the day, happily disembowelling your refrigerator or whatever it is, never offer him that screw-driver.

A Partnership

As I said, these are things women know by instinct, and this lengthy preamble is merely offered by way of illustrating the fact that there are fundamental differences in male and female psychology as well as physiology. (As babies, girls learn to talk sooner than boys, and see no reason why in later life they should renounce this head-start; men insist that women never see their jokes, or deflate their attempts at humour with irrelevant questions.) One of the most erroneous expressions ever coined is "equality of the sexes" There is no such thing, nor was there ever meant to be.

God arranged us as we are to complement each other, not to compete in our respective spheres. In the first chapter of Genesis we are told quite clearly that God created *man* in his own image and made *them* male and female, commissioning them to make human history in partnership. Woman is not inferior to man except in muscular strength, but she compensates for this with a different type of strength, exhibited in her greater endurance and capacity for suffering. In the essentials of their personality there is no inequality, but there are vast and far-reaching differences. How on earth, one wonders, did the relationship ever degenerate into aggression often so intense that the rabid feminist in her anxiety to be the equal of man forgets to be a woman, mistakenly believing that "equality" means the right of a woman to do a man's work. But the equality in question is proportional not mathematical, or else woman would have gained "equality" when she was allowed the privilege of working in mines or fighting in the trenches. Had God planned this kind of equality, he need never have created women at all. He gave man not a rival but a "help meet for him" as the Authorised Version so charmingly puts it: a mate to match, not in similitude but by compensation and contrast. Her strength lies in gentleness not brawn; she is indispensable to the home as he is to the task of supporting it. Neither were to be complete without the other, it was to be a partnership of interlocking skills and talents, so that neither would be able to get along alone.

Difference of Soul

Edith Stein, the German philosopher who became a Carmelite nun and died in the gas chambers of Auschwitz, was a recognised authority on the question of women's professions and place in modern society. As a schoolgirl she had been a radical feminist, but later lost interest in the question altogether, returning to it in maturity when a great number of her writings deal with the question. "That the sex difference is due merely to the body is a statement suspect on several grounds," she wrote. "First. If *anima forma corporis*, then the physical difference is the indication of the difference of soul. Second. Matter exists for form, not

vice versa. This makes it probable that the difference of soul is the primary one. Of course, it must be thoroughly examined how far growth into the supernatural can and should be an outgrowing of the natural differences." The original vocation of man and woman can be realised only if both once more become children of God. She was fully aware of the limitations of her sex as well as its special gifts, such as motherhood and sympathetic companionship. "It is man's nature to serve his cause directly, whereas woman serves it for his sake, and so it is fit that she should do so under his guidance." But when exaggerated, these laudable feminine virtues can become vices, so that the "sympathetic companion becomes the interfering busybody who cannot tolerate silent growth and thus does not foster development but hinders it". For the purely developed feminine nature of the wife and mother as her natural destiny would have her to be, Edith Stein presents a third image, that of the Blessed Virgin. In all expositions on the vocation of woman, she returned constantly to the figure of Our Lady, and the intimate relationship between Mary and the Church of which she is the perfect symbol, because the type and origin. Further, modern psychology teaches us that men and women are rarely pure "male" or "female" in their psychological make-up. All great women have notably "masculine" traits without being mannish" in the pejorative sense; while those men (and that includes all canonised saints) who possess "womanly" qualities of compassion, sympathy, gentleness, sensitive response to beauty, are not less but rather more "manly" for it than the rough male animal one remove from caveman.

Crushed by a Double Burden

Edith Stein dealt realistically with the question of women's professions other than the natural vocation of wife and mother. Emancipation is a *fait accompli* and it is useless trying to turn the clock back. Instead she discusses the place of women in the Church, and while rejecting the case for female priests, she disapproves strongly of canon law which allows no equality between the sexes, but arbitrarily debars women from all sacred offices. She even takes St. Paul to

task for his famous *mulier taceat in ecclesia* which some man invariably hurls at any woman who presumes to express her opinion on any religious matter, and points to the fact that our Lord had women among his most intimate and faithful friends, proving everywhere in his redemptive work that the soul of woman was as much his concern as that of man.

"If need be, every normal and healthy woman can do a job, and conversely there is no profession that could not be practised by a woman", for they are not capable only of filling their natural calling as wife and mother. Every woman has her individual gifts as has every man, but she does differentiate between "femine professions" (so-called because their work depends upon the specifically feminine gifts), which consist rather in assisting others than in purely creative work. Yet for the vast majority of women, their job is no more than a means of livelihood, uncongenial but necessary; the occupation itself is even more alien to their nature than to man's because it is mechanical and does not fulfil or satisfy. Edith Stein does acknowledge the vast difference between the ideal woman, sympathetic, self-sacrificing, discreet, loving — "so frighteningly different from the average life of the present-day woman"—and woman as she actually is. Her description is of Germany in the thirties, but its counterpart can be seen in any of our cities today:

"Crushed by the double burden of professional and family duties, they are always worn out, nervy, irritable. Where are they to find the interior calm and serenity in order to be a support and guide for others? . . . Many superficial and unstable women want only amusement in order to fill the interior void . . . If they have to take a job they regard it only as a means to earn their living and get as much enjoyment out of life as possible. In their case one can talk neither of vocation nor of ethos. The breaking up of the family and the decline of morals is essentially connected with this group and can only be stemmed if we succeed in diminishing its number through suitable education." Yet despite the depressing mediocrity of the "average", in all spheres of life true heroines are still to be found, "working real miracles of love and

achievement in their families and professions, as well as in the cloister." (1)

Self-respect

The equality of the sexes lies precisely in their difference; man, whether he acknowledges it or not, needs woman as a partner, not merely in marriage but in every sphere of life. In a sense one is incomplete without the other, and the question has only been confused by a wrong understanding of the sense of "equality". Women are not "emancipated" merely by working in coal mines or standing beside men at factory benches, and if they insist on renouncing their femininity in a determined effort to prove themselves "able to do anything a man can do", then they have no cause for complaint when men cease showing them courtesy, or chivalry declines. If they want to wear overalls and manipulate steam shovels, then there is no reason why, when going home from their manly toil, men should stand and offer them a seat on the bus. Further, although I hate to say this, women must shoulder the greater portion of responsibility for the promiscuity rampant in this age, because of deliberately provocative ways of dressing and general spirit of permissiveness. For some reason it has come to be regarded as prudish to object to bad language or smutty jokes in mixed company, and apparently we would prefer to be regarded as morally loose than prudes. Girls, where is your self-respect? No normal man takes liberties with a woman unless he receives some encouragement, and usually any incipient familiarity ceases upon active discouragement. The trials and tribulations suffered by famous and lesser-known women in the struggle for women's right to vote and work beside men were not an anarchic attempt to undermine the moral standards of our civilisation. Indeed, one suspects that could women like Christabel Pankhurst, Maude Royden and Eleanor Rathbone have foreseen what their battle for the franchise would lead to, they would immediately have called the whole thing off. Ironically, women were allowed to "fight" (as nurses in the field of battle) before they were

(1) This and all previous quotations are from *The Writings of Edith Stein*, translated by Hilda Graef.

permitted to vote, and Edith Cavell probably did more than any suffragette to swing the balance in the end. Women were allowed to work, but at such low wages that unemployed men complained of undercutting by "cheap" female labour. They were also permitted to attend universities and take medical degrees until it dawned upon the men that they actually had the brains and ability to acquire them, when means were promptly found to debar them from practice. All this, of course, was something that in ordinary justice had to disappear, and while today we can marvel that men could have been so pig-headed and prejudiced, we must also feel ashamed that despite extreme provocation, women could have behaved as badly as they did in the struggle to cast off their shackles.

Nowadays "lady" is something of a naughty word, having acquired overtones of exaggerated femininity: frills, furbelows, smelling-salts and clinging tendrils. Yet it remains true that, whether we substitute words such as "womanly" or "feminine", the definition I once read still holds: "A lady is a female in whose presence the male is a gentleman".

Women Priests ?

Today the question of women in the priesthood is raging in our land as it did in Germany between the wars, and I must confess at the outset that, being a woman, I have of necessity a woman's angle; but I see no validity in most of the arguments produced by women desirous of qualifying for holy orders. At the same time, however, I feel that much of the polemic used by men to counter these argument will appear as ridiculous in another fifty years (if not sooner) than those anathemas of half a century ago against the franchise for woman do in our ears today. For instance, that Adam not Eve is the head of the race (this again being the common masculine interpretation of Genesis 1:26-27 that God made not man but a *man*, and that he is "the lord of creation"; the bible, however, tells us that it is in man and woman as *one* that the likeness of God is to be found), and that had anyone who was not the head of a race (i.e. not a male) offered sacrifice it would not have been fully representative of all

mankind; and that, ergo, the essence of the priesthood consists in belonging to the male sex.

However, while such "theological" or biological fantasies are unconvincing as arguments against the ordination of women, I cannot see that female priests would be a practical asset to the Church, and some of the most ardent champions sound a disturbing note of feminist determination not to leave a single portion of masculine territory or prerogative unbreached. They have broken into law, medicine, politics, war-making, all those professions hitherto regarded as exclusively male preserves; they have become war correspondents, parachutists, and probably astronauts by now. But the priesthood is not merely another profession, and as Hilda Graef aptly pointed out in a letter to *Ampleforth Journal* on this question, "so long as the Western Church requires celibacy from its priests, women had better not make things more difficult for them by trying to be their colleagues"

Half the Human Race

Obviously women have basically the same role in the Church as men, beloved by God, destined to union with him, and equal in his sight; however, their role is in a sense complementary to man's in the Church as in the natural sphere. Woman not only can, but has the duty to inspire man to great actions, just as surely as she can drag him down or effect a general lowering of standards. Left to themselves, Monica Furlong once said, men "have a terrible steam-roller knack of ironing the minor graces out of life, leaving themselves with something tough and austere which is not what they want at all". Women and men can and should inspire, sustain and complement each other, bringing out and developing the potentialities of both in a vocation of service to the Church and the community. It was, I believe, a regrettable failure that the Council co-opted no women—not even women religious—to assist or advise during the preparatory stages or on working commissions, and that they were only brought in very late and as an afterthought to sit silently in the aula where, as Cardinal Suenens trenchantly remarked, they had no other function than "to remind the Council Fathers that half the human race consists of women".

It may be true as some claim that the restriction of the priesthood to men is cultural and historical only and not of divine institution, and therefore reversible. However, whether or not in some future age women will be ordained priests, I personally do not consider the present century is ripe for such a step. And one has serious misgivings on the score that those most vociferous in their demands to be ceded this privilege seem not the best qualified to accept its responsibilities or fulfil the office. On the whole, those women whom one feels might make acceptable priests seem in no way anxious to put themselves forward as candidates for the honour.

Right to be Consulted

Women should certainly be admitted to all Church consultations at every level, parochial, diocesan, national. And it seems that there is male prejudice at work in debarring women from any function in the Church. Male lay readers are not allowed into the sanctuary, and there seems no valid reason why a woman could not fill this office which must remain undone if a competent man is not present—and that even in convent chapels where there are dozens of nuns who have just officiated at the divine office, the Church's *opus Dei*, reading the lessons and pronouncing the official blessings in the Church's name. If there was any legitimate reason why it is unfitting for them to read a lesson during Mass, they could surely not qualify for choral recitation of the breviary, at least in the capacity of officiant.

Of all the men who have written on the subject of women's place in the Church and society, few have consistently talked such good sense as Father William Lawson, S.J., who patiently answers questions submitted each month to this review. Recently (July, 1966), he was taken to task for "wasting his time urging equality for women; they don't want it". In reply he argued cogently and concisely that "equality" was only one element of two on which right esteem for women is based. "To mention equality alone, ignoring uniqueness and originality, leads to misunderstanding and so to a continuation of pernicious injustices, perpetuated by women as well as men."

When everyone has discovered that Marxism is totally discredited, except for the few with closed minds, and those who have put their fingers in their ears to the voice of experience, it has been left to a group of Catholics to rediscover it. This, Hamish Fraser thinks must be the crowning absurdity of the latter half of this century.

The Crowning Absurdity

HAMISH FRASER

THE crowning absurdity of our epoch is that the 'Catholic' *avant garde* is at least half a century behind the man in the street. Although it was always a contradiction in terms, 'Catholic' Marxism in one form or another was at least comprehensible at the turn of the century. For although Pope Leo XIII had effected an *aggiornamento* of Catholic social doctrine by 1891, little or nothing was known of it at grass roots level, by the generality of either clergy or laity, and as a consequence there was widespread non-culpable ignorance among ordinary workers. Coupled to this was the fact that the overwhelming majority of the Catholic population of the U.K. was made up of deracinated Irish immigrants and their families, whose living standards symbolised their status as third-class citizens. In their legitimate quest for social justice, it was inevitable that they would look towards the trade unions and the then nascent Labour Party. It was indeed right that they should do so, and but for the prevailing ignorance of Catholic social doctrine, they might well have permeated the working class movement as a whole with Christian social principles, for the Labour Party did not become even formally Socialist until after the Russian Revolution.

Alas, thanks to Catholic ignorance of the Church's patrimony of social wisdom, the Socialist ideologues had no competitors within the working class movement. Hence the

most significant take-over bid of the century met with little or no opposition. But even after 1918, when the Labour Party became formally Socialist, there was still ample opportunity for a counter-offensive, for even after 1918, the Labour Party and the unions were anything but doctrinaire. Their main preoccupation was the advancement of social reform.

It is true that by the 'thirties the situation had deteriorated considerably. By then, proletarians throughout the entire 'capitalist' world were either unemployed or terror-stricken at the thought of becoming unemployed. And yet the U.S.S.R. seemed to be doing very nicely — that is if the copious pro-Soviet propaganda of the period were to be believed. And why should it have been doubted? It was so easy for Communism's critics to be dismissed as mere agents of the despised 'boss class', who, of course, had a vested interest in seeking to discredit the land of Socialism which claimed to have abolished unemployment once and for all. Moreover, one didn't require to take Communist propaganda on trust. There were also the painstaking if somewhat verbose, but scholarly and thus presumably reliable Webbs, whose magisterial work, *Soviet Communism—A New Civilisation*, was enough to silence any doubting Thomas. Here was Communism given an *imprimatur* by the archpriests of Fabianism.

Serious Doubts about Paradise

It was only towards the end of the 'thirties and during the early 'forties when the truth about the Ukraine and about the massive Stalinist purges of the 'thirties began to percolate even into Socialist minds, when the Koestlers and the Stracheys began to defect by the dozen, that pro-Communist working men became free to entertain serious doubts about the state of affairs in the Socialist paradise. But even then the net result was rather to reinforce opinion in favour of some form of 'democratic' Socialism that would enable workers to enjoy the cake of freedom while devouring the leaven of private property, without which there is no cake. For alas few are the people even now who realise the importance of the truth emphasised by Pope John in *Mater et*

Magistra: that . . . 'the exercise of freedom finds its guarantee and incentive in the right of ownership.'

But from then on disillusionment concerning Communism soon made way for disillusionment concerning Marxism and all its works and pomps, particularly in post-war Europe, where even long-established Socialist parties showed an increasing tendency to shed doctrinaire nostrums. This process reached its culminating point over a year ago when a group of French Socialist intellectuals co-operated to produce a species of Socialism based upon respect not only for private enterprise but also for the principle of subsidiarity⁽¹⁾. Indeed, as things are, the British Labour Party which was so late in becoming Socialist is now perhaps the most doctrinaire of all the old-fashioned Socialist parties of the West. But even so, it is doctrinaire in practice rather than in theory; it acts in the name of a vaguely defined 'progress' (almost indistinguishable from that which enslaves its two rivals) rather than in the name of Marx.

Rediscovery of the Rejected

The crowning absurdity of the second half of the 20th century is that, with the exception of 'progressive' Catholics, there is scarcely anyone in politics, save of course the Communists, who is prepared to admit to being inspired by Marxism. But even in this respect, Britain is lagging at Europe's heels. For whereas this form of 'Catholic' progressivism has been the curse of France for two decades and more it did not cross the Channel until the mid-sixties. And even then its British devotees couldn't take their Marxism straight. Hence *Slant*, organ of the *New Left Church*, whose various publications represent a veritable syllabus of errors so moth-eaten that to condemn them afresh would be to give them an importance they do not deserve.

It is left now for the *New Left Church* to rediscover Marxism at the very moment when Communism is completely and utterly discredited wherever it has been experienced: from Eastern Europe to Indonesia, and from 'peace-loving' India to martyred Vietnam; when the U.S.S.R. itself, the home of the Revolution, after a mere half century of Soviet

⁽¹⁾ *Le Socialisme et l'Europe* is the title of their manifesto.

power, is experiencing total ideological as well as agricultural bankruptcy. This 'Catholic' infatuation with Marxism is happening at the precise moment when the world is littered with countless millions of disillusioned Communists; when in China there is virtual civil war within the ruling Party; when in the West avowed Socialist parties are vying with each other in the development of a thoroughly 'bourgeois' image; when it is becoming increasingly apparent in the British Welfare State that Welfarism and true social welfare are quite incompatible; when British doctors and surgeons are voting against the National Health Service with their passports; when an increasing proportion of British parents is in open revolt against the consequences of nationalised education; when all the available evidence indicates that there is only one way forward to social harmony, peace and progress properly so-called: the reformation of an organic society in accordance with the social principles of Mother Church. It is at this moment that the *Slant* group of *New Left Churchmen* has the impudence to pretend that Marxism is the very last word in progressive social theory.

Needless to say, these bright young intellectuals hasten to assure us that *true* Marxism would not have led to the excesses of the Stalin epoch and the disillusionment of today. The answer is that neither did the Bucharins of this world think so—until they were already on the way to 'liquidation'. But even the *Slant* group's apparent naïvete would be more convincing did they not even now prefer to associate themselves with *Pax*, the secret police agency that was responsible for harrying the Silent Church in Poland, rather than with the heroic Cardinal Primate of that tortured land.⁽²⁾

(2) At a conference at Edinburgh on November 26, 1966, Terence Eagleton, leader of the *Slant* group, admitted publicly that the group was on the best of terms with *Pax*.

Is it fanciful to detect a parallel between the shattering of the unity of Israel and the end of the unity of Christendom at the time of the Reformation? With the passage of time, and the weakness of divided Christians, the Churches have realised how much richer the life of each would be if its own insights were enriched by the insights of others.

Ecumenism: Teaching, Learning, or Both?

VINCENT ROCHFORD

THE Vatican Council is teaching us once again to see the Church as a People, the People of the New Covenant. But one cannot think of this People without reference all the time to the first People to be chosen by God, the People of the Old Covenant, the one made at Sinai. For there is an inescapable continuity between the two. Christ's community of followers did not come into existence out of a void; on the contrary the old community of believers in Yahweh was totally orientated towards the new, whose prayer, worship, and sacraments bear daily witness to us of this truth. The historical fact of Christian hatred for the Jews grows daily more incredible and inexplicable as we ponder our debt to the first Chosen People. It is remarkable how the evolution, the crises, betrayals and triumphs of that People are reflected in the history of the Church. Upon a higher register, as it were, her journey through history seems to reproduce, in many respects, the story of theirs in the times long ago before Christ.

At first sight it would seem that they have nothing to do with the Ecumenical movement. The scandals, as we are learning to see them, of division among Christians might

appear as far removed as possible from the experience of the Jewish People. Yet this is not so. For they too had their schisms, and if the ending of their greatest division was different from what we hope will be the mending of ours, nevertheless it contains its warning.

Israel's Unity Shattered

After their lifetime in the wilderness, the Hebrew people slowly took possession of their promised land, Palestine, subjugating its inhabitants. For a century and a half they existed as a loose confederation of the twelve tribes, finding occasional unity under inspired military leaders whom they called "Judges", this temporary unity bringing them strength to resist outside aggression.

Eventually they felt that their lack of political structure was a source of weakness which must be remedied, and their eyes turned more and more towards the institution of kingship which was traditional among their neighbours and enemies. They felt that only a single ruler, recognised by all the tribes, could bind them together into a single state that would be ready to meet any crisis which could arise. With deep misgiving their leader Samuel accepted their proposal, and so Saul came to the throne, his reign spent in a series of deathly struggles against their enemies. His successor, David, succeeded in pacifying the whole country, and his fascinating story has haunted his people's memory ever since. His son Solomon succeeded in building a mercantile empire. Everything looked set for a prosperous future; but at his death underground dissatisfaction in the North with his exactions came to the surface, and after a short period of uncertainty the whole North broke away and declared its independence. The unity of God's People was broken. Of twelve tribes, ten had seceded from Jerusalem. The site of the throne and newly-built Temple spoke now for only two tribes out of the twelve.

Schism

And so they remained, divided, pursuing their separate ways suspicious of each other. For two centuries the descendants of those whom God had called into a special

relationship with himself were divided, split into two separate camps, Juda and Israel. So it continued until in 721 B.C. King Sargon of Assyria overcame the rebellious Northern kingdom of Israel and deported most of its inhabitants into Persia. There they mingled with the native population and disappeared from history, their identity finally lost.

During this schism it was the Southern kingdom of Juda that was "orthodox". It was Juda that was ruled by the descendants of the hero-king David. It was the city of his foundation that was their capital. It was they who could worship Yahweh in the marvellous Temple that his son had erected. It was they who were the true inheritors of the promises.

Yet Israel, the Northern kingdom of the dissident twelve tribes, had no intention of deserting the tradition of their forefathers, of abandoning the Covenant under which these had lived. It is true that pagan idolatry came to flourish among them—but so it did in Juda, if not so blatantly. They set up two national shrines to counterbalance the prestige of Jerusalem and its Temple, but these shrines, intended to give a certain national cohesion, were ancient religious shrines from the days of their earliest settlement in Canaan. Their leaders had no wish to introduce among them the worship of new gods; on the contrary they wished to renew Israel's devotion to the God of the Covenant.

Grace in Israel

And in fact the tradition of the old tribal confederacy remained more alive in the North than it did in the Davidic circles of the South. And God sent prophets to the schismatic North. Hosea, Amos, the great Elijah, were men of the North sent to their fellow-countrymen. Yahweh's grace was visibly at work among the "heretic" tribes of the North, as much as down in the South, where one might have expected it to shine out. Sanctity flourished, at least in its heroic form, as much among the one as the other.

Does it seem fanciful to detect a parallel here with the history of God's new People? When the majority of the Hebrews defected from their orthodox authority and from

unity with their brethren, is their action not analogous with that of the Reform? For here was the Catholic Church, unchallenged in Europe, save for tiny local revolts, for centuries; whilst exploration was promising to open up undreamed opportunities for missionary activity. Then, suddenly, brutally, the larger part of Europe secedes. And this was done, not in order to launch any new religion, but all in the name of fidelity to ancient tradition, of a return to more primitive and purer beliefs—just as with the Israelite schism. Cruel wars of religion were waged, but neither side could suppress the other. Eventually they had to learn to live, if not together, at least side by side; to live in separation, in rivalry, despising and suspecting each other, refusing to meet or to try to understand each other, with both sides relying on the support of political regimes and alliances.

Impoverishment of Separation

The separation impoverished both. The new freedom of Protestantism, with every man his own authority in matters of belief and of biblical interpretation, rapidly made the new religions fissiparous. They divided and sub-divided, so that today there are in U.S.A. two hundred religious bodies that claim descent from the Reform; and this confusion, the absence of accepted norms, causes uncertainty and grief to their adherents. It is the result of freedom run riot. And indeed it was from these quarters that the first efforts at drawing closer were to come, in 1908.

The passage of time, the weakness of Christians in the world, an understanding by most Christian bodies of how much has been lost to them by the concentration only on certain emphases which history imposed, a consciousness of how much richer the life of each could be if its own insights were tempered and enriched by those cherished by their separated brethren—all these are powerful motives urging them to draw closer, to understand and profit from a sympathetic, respectful and loving contact with each other.

The Vatican Council urges on us all the duty of ecumenical enthusiasm.

CURRENT COMMENT

In the second of a series of five open letters to the Catholic Left, Father Paul Crane queries some of their basic assumptions, especially those which see Christian love as a limitless, emotional outpouring, denied full play, in consequence, within the fixed framework of contemporary society.

Letters to the Catholic Left

2: INTENSITY AND COMMITMENT

THE EDITOR

GENTLEMEN,

My first letter to you was concerned with a couple of phrases in Terry Eagleton's foreword to his book, *The New Left Church*. Since reading it, I have studied as closely as I can and given a lot of thought to the first and last chapters in that book entitled "The New Left Church" and "Alienation and Community". It is with them particularly that this letter and those that follow it will be concerned.

A Thesis at Fault

Here, once again, I find myself, at the outset of what I have to say, querying certain of Eagleton's basic assumptions. Speaking of the need Christians are under to foster the growth of a new society, he draws attention, at the outset of his essay on "The New Left Church", to the seeming incompatibility between the intensity of feeling which, according to him, marks Christian belief and the network of relationships embedded in social life and within which Christian belief must take expression. On the one hand, the limitless outpouring of love which Christianity commands; on the other, the limited, because fixed relationships, which are endemic to social living. How, then, are the two to be reconciled? One thinks, at first, of com-

promise; but compromise is ruled out by the very nature, as intense of that extremity of love which, in Eagleton's view, appears to lie at the heart of the Christian experience. Of its nature, love knows no limits. It cannot, therefore, be reconciled with a world of fixed social relationships. To seek a compromise here is to destroy it. Hence, Eagleton's dilemma. Christian love—what he calls intensity—let loose in society either breaks the lover or forces him to give it outlet in a world apart, thus alienating him from his fellow-men. In neither case is society itself affected. Yet, "As Christians we are committed to the idea of intensity, we live as potential martyrs, and yet we are also claiming to have something to contribute to the problem of how men should commonly live in society".

In the light of Eagleton's dilemma, Christian commitment, in his opinion and that of yourselves, gentlemen, would appear to have gone by default. Again, according to yourselves, all Christianity appears to have been able to do in the past is to have kept calling vaguely for the conversion of mankind, whilst bidding the faithful seek salvation in a kind of compound-Church apart from the society of their fellow-men. As you see it, that Church has contributed nothing to the shape of society; as a social force it has proved totally ineffective. The search, therefore, must be for a new social form which will incorporate to the full the intensity of Christian experience. I think I am right in saying that Eagleton and yourselves are of the opinion that Marxist-Socialism alone provides society with a form in which intensity can have full play. Hence, your insistence that Christianity, to be true to itself, must identify its social aspirations with radical Marxist thought.

Counsels and Commandments

Above, I have tried to represent your thesis as fairly and as clearly as I can. I wish in what follows to question the two assumptions on which it appears to rest. The first is "that Christianity is an extremist belief, extreme and uncompromising in its tolerance (which I take as "capacity to bear injuries in the fight for justice") and love"; the second, that extremism of this sort, conceived as an unlimited out-

pouring, is incompatible with a society of fixed (and, therefore, limited) relationships like those which characterise contemporary capitalism.

I would like to begin with Eagleton's concept of intensity as applied to Christianity, which causes him to see it as an extremist belief; one that will not brook half-measures, which refuses compromise. As Christians, Eagleton writes, "We have to be totally committed to Christ". This statement, I would suggest, is not accurate. It is true that, in the negative sense, all Christians have to be against sin and, to that extent, positively for Christ. It is their business to remain in the state of (Grace) friendship or communion with God and the least required for this is the avoidance of sin. But there are degrees of friendship: to interpret the essence of the Christian vocation in terms of a positive and rigid obligation to achieve perfect friendship with God is to misinterpret the claim made by Christ on his followers and maintained by His Church. Our Lord's first injunction to the rich young man in the Gospel was to keep the Commandments. It was only when asked what more he should do that Christ told him, if he wanted to be perfect, to sell up his goods, give the proceeds to the poor and follow Him. No-one would deny that Christians should be encouraged to seek the heights of perfection; but Christ never commanded them to do so. Neither does His Church. This does not imply any lowering of ideals. Every Christian is encouraged to be perfect; but the essence of his Christianity is not to be found in a rigid command to achieve perfection.

Perfectionism and Tyranny

I cannot, therefore, agree with Eagleton that Christianity means intensity in terms of that limitless outpouring of love which is an expression of total commitment to Christ. I can say this and, at the same time, wish most heartily, as I do, that there were more whose Christian living was as intense as Eagleton would have it to be. I can agree, too, that the world would be a better place if there were more who lived intensively. What I cannot do, however, is to change my interpretation of Christianity to suit my desires; to say that, because the world would be a better place if

Christians loved without limit, therefore all Christians are commanded by their Faith to this kind of loving. This would be to shift facts to suit desire; to remove oneself from the truth of things as they are in the hope of making a world as it might be. The result would be an extremist brand of fanaticism, short-lived, as a rule, and blended in most cases with one kind of tyranny or another. History is full of examples in illustration of this point. One need only think of the despotism of Calvin's Geneva, the savagery of the Scottish Covenanters with their cry of "Jesus and no Quarter," the witch-hunting Puritans of New England and Cromwell's "Saints". The Church has had her failures, but not of this kind. Her representatives have fallen at times from the ideal that should be theirs; but she has never fallen into the heresy of imposed perfectionism as a Christian way of life. The more one looks at her history, the more one marvels at the balance she has maintained in a world too often plagued by the aberrations of fanatical perfectionists. She has always refused to try her children beyond their strength, calling all to the heights of holiness, but imposing perfection on none. In this, she has been faithful to the revelation of her Founder, who called men to come freely to Himself, but refused to bind them with impossible burdens. None is more aware than the Catholic Church that the work of Grace is to assist nature, never to crush it. The strain endemic in Eagleton's brand of intensive loving would break most human beings in no time.

I feel that a large element of subjectivism enters into Eagleton's concept of the Christian life as necessarily intensive in its loving because meant to be lived by those who are, as he says, totally committed to Christ. It would be accurate to represent this as an ideal held out to all who are Christians—in this true sense, that they share life in Christ with each other. The difference is one between counsels and commandments, two ways of achieving perfection to which none are obliged, but all are called. Eagleton's mistake here is one of subjective exaggeration. He would be wise to note Chesterton's warning that most heresy consists in the unreasoned exaggeration of a particle of truth.

Love and Emotion

Eagleton's subjectivism shows itself in two further ways. I think it important to take note of them, for they affect his concept of intensity as limitless loving attempting to operate within the framework of fixed social relationships. In the first place, he sees love essentially as an emotional thing, an outpouring without limit; something that batters subject and object to pieces; that can brook no compromise, fills life with drama and ends, as often as not, in tragedy. Love certainly can do all these things and there is no doubt that it has a high emotional content. But its essence is in the will. I wonder if Eagleton believes this. It is interesting that the examples he takes of loving are all from the field of intense and emotional personal relationships, with their concept of it as a thing unfettered, unconfined, prepared to dash its possessor to pieces rather than brook restraint. Of its nature it is presented as a force of the emotions that must flow out on others unchecked.

I am not surprised that Eagleton should present this picture of love and confront himself, in consequence, with the dilemma which comes from its attempted reconciliation with the humdrum world of workaday social relationships. Eagleton, after all, is a literary scholar of some merit. His world of books is largely, perhaps, a world of high drama educed by love raised to the heights of a noble and tragic intensity. This is his scholar's world. His mistake consists in projecting it as common experience on which to build a theory of society; to give us a literary drama of noble emotions as the stuff of our daily bread. This is where he goes completely wrong. The mistake is common to many intellectuals. Were Eagleton and yourselves, gentlemen, to look a little more closely at the world of men's workaday lives, you would find it everywhere in illustration of the truth that love is rooted essentially in the will. Its emotional content is something to thank God for, but its roots are in the will. Moreover, to be given full force, its emotions must be under the control of the will. Eagleton is greatly in error with his implication that love is at its most powerful when running unleashed and without restraint. His

concept of "forgiveness"—the "free and irrational bestowal of love in a place where objectively it is undeserved"—has a certain nobility of content. Conceived, however, as a norm of social living, this would end in nothing but disaster.

Discrimination and Love

I say this, not in advocacy of lowered social standards, but because outpoured love as Eagleton conceives it—the unchecked stream of emotion, which he appears to see as the essence of Christian integrity—is bound, just because it is unchecked, to be out of the control of the will and, therefore indiscriminate. This is the second characteristic of Eagleton's subjective concept of love. It follows from the first, which regards it, in essence, as a thing of the emotions, unfettered intensity outpoured. Eagleton sees Christian love, in its application to society, as quite indiscriminate, disordered in itself and, therefore, destructive of order. Eagleton is quite ready to admit this. He writes on page 22:

"As soon as the element of forgiveness is introduced into a balanced pattern of value and meaning, the pattern crumbles, and the values and meanings have to be redefined in relation to this new, irrational force. Forgiveness can thus be a dangerous thing, precisely because it has this gratuitous, incalculable quality; societies tend to function on different assumptions, on the ideas of fixed value and rational proportions, action and reaction."

From this and other passages in like vein Eagleton concludes to a basic incompatibility between the intensity of Christian experience and present society in its contemporary capitalist form. Leaving capitalism aside for the time being, I would go further and say that Christian intensity, as Eagleton conceives it, is incompatible with—has no place as a normative rule for—society in any visible shape or form: its end is anarchy. Quite apart from the fact that no individual is capable of sustaining love at the pitch of emotional intensity demanded by Eagleton's concept, its indiscriminate application is destructive of order and, therefore, of society, which results from an ordered application of wills to a common objective.

A Recent Example

Earlier this year, there was an example of the kind of thing I have in mind. *The Times* reported on January 17th of this year the case, in Quebec, of a certain Father Jean de la Trinité, leader of a sect known as the Apostles of Infinite Love. He had been gaoled very properly for refusing to reveal the whereabouts of forty-eight children remaining out of sixty-six confined to a monastery run by Father Jean and his "apostles". The children had been hidden in order to be kept from the protection ordered for them by a welfare court on the ground that they were in poor health and inadequately fed; suffering, that is, from the effects of indiscriminate loving at the hands of the Apostles of Infinite Love. Is this what Eagleton wants, for this, I can assure him, is where his beliefs would land any society consigned to his creed of Christian intensity as a norm of social living. History is full of similar examples. Ronald Knox has treated of plenty in the pages of *Enthusiasm*. They bear eloquent witness not merely to the need for authority, which Eagleton appears to disregard, but to the unwisdom of his plea for "freedom from law and fixed categories, fixed values" in order, presumably, that love may be given full sweep. Because he sees love essentially as an indiscriminate outpouring of unchecked emotion, he is unable to reconcile it with the fixities of contemporary society. Granted his assumption, the incompatibility follows. His assumption, however, is incorrect. Love is rooted not in the emotions, but in the will. It is meant, therefore, to be discriminating in its expression, manifold, not merely compatible with, but essential to the kind of ordered living which is basic to healthy society. Far from being incompatible with order, it must be ordered by the will to be effective and any social order, to come alive, needs to feel the effect of its application. Love, in other words, must be channelled. It is like a river whose spate needs skilful control if its bounty is to be brought to the parched soil beyond its banks. The will must be brought into play. Love is made no less thereby. Its flame does not diminish. In fact, it grows to burn more brightly at the

instance of those who direct it, for Christ's sake, to the service of their fellow-men.

Christ's Love at Work

Here again and more happily, history is full of examples. So are the times in which we live. Not long ago, in Ireland, I met a young girl working with complete dedication and, incidentally, great intuitive skill, for mentally retarded children. Her one desire now is to do similar work on a Catholic Mission in Asia. I know of an increasing number whose outlook and dedication are similar. Still others I have seen on my travels who, for Christ's sake, are giving their lives to a varied range of works from which they can hope for nothing for themselves. I am thinking, for example, of the Capuchin father who took me round part of his parish in the slums of Karachi, four acres of muck which held a population of 20,000 people congealed in the depths of misery. I can still see him now as he walked unafraid through the wretchedness and filth, laying a gentle hand on the heads of children whose poor naked bodies were scarred with smallpox, crying in their pain. There are so many like him. On the other side of the world in the West Indies, on the island of Jamaica, a great American Jesuit, Father Eberle, has spent his missionary life amongst the poor in the slums of Kingston. Back again on the other side, in India, I shall never forget a morning spent with Father Mascarenas and his team of helpers at Worli, a slum where fishermen live and work in the heart of the Red Belt of Bombay. I can see even now the place where two of his helpers, young Indian nuns, lived in the midst of the poverty which encompassed them—a box of baked mud, like an outside dog kennel, with a dirt floor and hardly a stick of furniture; not a trace of comfort anywhere. I could tell the same story of the Africa that I know, of this country and others, as I have moved around them during the short span of my own life and limited experience. Others could add to the tale, which would become in the telling a mighty litany of love whose impact, becomes the more powerful when set against the remembrance that the present commitment of so many Christians is no more than extension of similar commitment

in the past. Reading Eagleton I have the feeling that he knows nothing of this; that he has read nothing of the past and seen little of the present; that his writing is done without any real experience of what dedicated Christians are accomplishing in the world; of the willed intensity of their commitment to it in love.

What Commitment Means

Not for these the incompatibility, which Eagleton emphasises throughout his essay, between the intensity of limitless emotional loving and the fixities of contemporary social relationships. Their love is no less because channelled with dedicated care to the good of their neighbour. The discriminating thoughtfulness of their struggle against social injustice—essential if resources are to be rightly deployed—does not mean that they are tolerant of the system that has produced it. They are aware of its abuses. Most of them have been fighting them, in one way or another, all their lives. They are not to be less esteemed because, instead of bashing themselves to pieces against its rough edges, they wear themselves out over the years in a relentless struggle that seeks to remove abuses responsible for injustice or, at least, to counter their worst effects. Is Father Eberle's life amongst the poor in the slums of Kingston to be scorned as compromise because, instead, he does not spend his time leading hungry mobs in a rampage around Government House? Must men do a *Collins* in order to be committed to Christ? Is the messy jamboree of CND's Easter March the only outward sign of inward Christian commitment? And where are all the marchers now? I don't know, gentlemen; neither do I care. But I know where Father Eberle is and I care an awful lot about that. He is in his slum parish in Kingston, happy with his poor.

Lady Chatterley and the Little Sisters

What Eagleton fails to realise is that there are kinds of loving of which the sort embodied in the high drama of personal relationships is only one example and a rare one at that. Moreover, the intensity of a passionate relationship is inappropriate as an example for Christians to follow in

their endeavour to right the wrongs of social injustice. Because Eagleton confines his concept of love to this manner of its expression he concludes to its incompatibility with—its inability to affect—the fixed fabric of an often unjust social order. From this he draws two conclusions which are both illegitimate. He concludes, in the first place, that Christianity is incapable of commitment because without any ability to change the present state of society. From this he draws the further conclusion that, since commitment is enjoined on Christianity, its vocation must be to identify itself with radical Socialism, which Eagleton considers alone capable of transforming society in such a way that the intensity of Christian commitment can find full and (therefore, for him) true outlet within its framework. This second conclusion of Eagleton's will be considered in subsequent letters. For the moment, I am content to emphasise, in recapitulation of my argument throughout this letter, that Eagleton's first conclusion is wrong because his premiss is wrong. He concludes to the inability of Christians to commit themselves to society because he fails to understand what Christian commitment is. His failure here flows from the fact that his concept of love, the basis of commitment, is confined to the emotional intensity of personal relationships. It is not seen as rooted in the will, therefore manifold in its expression, discriminating, capable of directing its intensity within the fixed relationships of contemporary society: working to heal its injustices as well as to change it.

Love is not only the passionate intensity of a deep personal relationship. It is, to a far greater extent and far more frequently, what Saint Paul tells us it is—patient, kind, not puffed up, bearing all things, never giving up, persevering to the very end. Lady Chatterley is a bad starting point for any study of Christian loving in its impact on contemporary society. Eagleton would have done better had he made a beginning with the Little Sisters of the Poor.

Sincerely yours,
Paul Crane, S.J.

A famous and vivid illustration of the act of falling in love leads to the reflection that all Catholics have it in their power to transform their lives. How strange it is then that so many good people are ineffectual? And have to turn to the state to achieve desirable communal ends.

Twig Adorned with Diamonds

E. L. WAY

HERE is a famous passage in Stendhal (*De l'Amour*) which merits quotation, and upon which we can reflect fruitfully. "At the salt mines of Salzburg," he wrote, "you throw into the depths of a disused shaft a leafless branch; two or three months afterwards you take it out covered with brilliant crystallisations: the smallest twigs, no bigger than a titmouse's foot, are adorned with an infinity of scintillating diamonds. One can no longer recognise the original branch.

"What I call crystallisation is the operation of the mind that draws from everything around it the discovery that the beloved object has new perfections." Everyone who has fallen in love will be struck with the aptness of this vivid illustration. And not only the beloved acquires new perfections but the face of the earth seems to be renewed. We see the world with a poet's eyes, and see that it is good and beautiful. Stendhal described falling in love as "the act of folly which makes us see every perfection in the object of one's love". He was a cynic, and held a very low opinion of his fellow-creatures. To him they were hateful and ignoble. Of course they are odious and base, but this is only the sinister side of human nature. On the other side we can see disinterested love to the point where men and women have submitted to torture and death rather than betray their friends. How often it happened in the second world war.

The Little Moments

But these are the big moments of existence. The focal points at which there is a summing up, perhaps in a flash, of all that has gone before. They are the logical outcome of a way of life, and a habit of thought. But what of the little moments that, added together, like the polyps which are the principle source of the coral reefs, go to make up the lives of us who are of less heroic temper? Are not the lives of some people a long drawn out martyrdom? A series of moments in which pain is frequently present. You meet, say, a little, frail, grey-haired woman. She is normally described as having a chip on her shoulder. Everything goes wrong with her. She has been a widow for twenty years or more. She is always making mistakes in her work, and so is shifted from one boring job to another. She imagines that people are constantly talking about her behind her back. She is right. They usually are. She is ill for months, and when she returns to work is asked to pay back £30. From her account, it is difficult to find out why. She has got things even more muddled than usual. She hears voices in the toilet, the voices of women talking hatefully about her. She says they must be using microphones. The voices she hears say generally what you would expect them to say. You are forcibly reminded of *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold*. But she has not the resources of a Pinfold. Sometimes you laugh at her because her gibberish can be interpreted to make acute sense and, almost immediately, hide the grimace of pain which distorts your features on learning that during her illness she had a cancerous breast removed. You swear to yourself that you will not laugh at her again. But, in spite of yourself, you do. And she shames you even further by an act of kindness.

So Powerless

In the face of only one example like that you recognise your utter helplessness. And you know that the race of the unfortunate includes millions. The man next door to you is working without any overtime, and his money is down every week by about £5. He has two babies and two more children at school. A family of seven, a few streets away,

must be in difficulty because the breadwinner is working only 3 days a week. Others have been declared redundant after 17 years with the same firm. These are not to be thought of as arguments for or against the present government's measures to halt inflation. First and foremost they are people, and not arguments. The £30 to be extracted from the widow, week by week until the utmost farthing is paid, may result in the voices she hears screaming her into a breakdown. Faced with her case, one can't shed tears over the worries of businessmen who will not risk their capital to start new businesses because their profits will be intercepted. Instead of buying a new car every year, the poor things will have to buy a new one in 1968.

Transformation

Stendhal, as we have seen, compared the act of falling in love to the leafless branch coming out of the disused shaft of a salt mine two or three months later covered in diamonds. For us Christians it is the God we consume at the communion rail which should result in a similar transformation. With the saints it is visible. Did not Simone Weil conceive "for the first time the idea of the supernatural power of the sacraments" when she saw at the Benedictine monastery of Solesmes a young Englishman with "angelic radiance which seemed to clothe him as he was returning from communion"? We are without the angelic radiance, need we also forever be unable to rise to the occasion when confronted with suffering? It is injurious to the spirit to be burdened with a useless compassion: a compassion which increases sorrow but brings no alleviation.

Ineffectual

The good who will not put their hands into the purse of the widow, and refuse to sanction such a proceeding by any kind of defence, are certainly not so wise as the children of this world. Reading recently an admirably informative criticism of the works of Dostoevsky, I came across a passage declaring that Prince Myskin in *The Idiot*, and Aloysha in *The Brothers Karamazov*, in spite of their gentleness, sweetness and humility are strangely ineffectual creatures. But

what is strange about this? If you thrust a gazelle into a den of tigers you cannot reasonably wonder at the creature's agonised helplessness. Goodness disarms human beings so utterly that they feel as if they are bound hand and foot, and are only capable of futile protests. Overcome by the evil of the world they desire, in their weaker and more cowardly moments, to shrink within themselves, and so hide from the brutalities of the world. It is really wishing for death. They are essentially thoughtful people incapable of action in the business of the world. Fortunately the mood passes. A warm and unseasonably springlike morning in February, the sun shining in a far off misty blue sky, will set their hearts beating with gladness. (One is reminded of Johnson's comment on Tom Davies writing of "*This sad affair of Baretti . . .* and at the same time recommending an industrious young man who kept a pickle-shop: 'Ay, sir,' said Johnson, 'here you have a specimen of human sympathy; a friend hanged, and a cucumber pickled. We know not whether Baretti or the pickle-man has kept Davies from sleep; nor does he know himself . . . You will find these very feeling people not very ready to do you good. They *pay* you by *feeling*.'") But then men of action are frequently incapable of much thought or of feeling. Like caged lions they must be on the move. Action and accumulation are the opium of energetic people.)

Government Action

It is because the individual is so often powerless that he turns with a deep sigh of relief to the state. He knows the evils of capitalism, and he has read countless books and articles on the evils of Communism. He is between the devil and the deep sea, wishing to flee from one without plunging down the Gadarene slope to the other. The dilemma is solved by many like the dilemma of death. They refuse to think about either. You will find intelligent and saintly Christians who, while freely admitting the dreadful evils of our system, stoutly affirm that no solution can be found in politics. You must disagree with them because you know that politics and government action have already transformed our lives for the better. Yet in one's more downcast moments

one is tempted to take refuge in their asylum. The cries of our neighbours in distress do not penetrate there. But the text in *Genesis* winkles us out of our spiritual dugout: "In truth we are guilty concerning our brother in that we saw the distress of his soul when he besought us, but we would not listen".

No Bounds to Charity

In his Lenten Pastoral Letter, Cardinal Heenan mentioned the play, *Cathy Come Home*, which was viewed on the BBC by many more than twelve million people, that figure accounting only for its first performance. The Cardinal said: "The public has learned at last that degrading poverty can abound even in a welfare state". He went on to add that "television and press served them (the public) well over *Cathy*. But neither TV nor press is likely to teach people a true sense of proportion. The publicity given to *Cathy* was equalled by that given to a horse named 'Arkle'". A true sense of proportion, that is what we need so badly. When we acquire it the wrongs of widows, and the scandalous injustice of paying semi-starvation wages to men with families will be seen as outstanding priorities. And the 'woes' of businessmen unable to make more than 12 per cent on their capital by risking it, instead of only 6 per cent in gilt-edged, will sink to their natural level, that is above 'Arkle's' injured foot.

The Cardinal added, "We are asked to set no bounds to the field of charity. Living conditions at home can be, as we have discovered, distressing and deplorable but they are ideal compared with parts of Africa, Asia, and South America. Human beings are often living under worse conditions there than animals in England. The Holy Father has called upon Catholics throughout the world to take a more active part in the War on Want".

If a lifeless branch can be turned into a thing of beauty by a sojourn in a salt mine, surely the soul can be transfigured into a source of love by the nourishment it receives from the body of Christ ?

MONTHLY REPORT

In his journey through the islands, Fr. Clump reports on the activities of a group of students from Canefield House, mentions the lack of serious effort of the leaders of the newly independent Guyana to lay the foundations of social peace and harmony, and touches on the problem of the exodus of population from the West Indies best summed up in the saying: "It is easier to drive a bus in London than to cut cane".

Island Passage

CYRIL CLUMP, S.J.

"LADIES and gentlemen, this is your Captain speaking", the voice came over the intercom as the BWIA 272 Boeing began its descent towards Atkinson airfield, Guyana. "On the left you can see Georgetown, decorated and in festive mood in preparation for Independence Day on May 26th". We touched down at Atkinson at 10.30 on the morning of Sunday, 22nd May, during what appeared to be a tropical downpour.

Among the V.I.P.s who left the plane was Archbishop Bruno Torpigliani, Apostolic Nuncio to El Salvador, who was to represent Pope Paul VI as extraordinary ambassador at the independence celebrations. He was met by Bishop Guilly, Bishop of Georgetown and some officials of the Guyana Government. Meanwhile the rain came down in torrents, and a taxi ferry service operated between the Boeing and the airport buildings.

While Atkinson airport was drenched by a tropical shower, Georgetown was free from rain. Bunting and flags flew from every pole and building while crowds milled around through the lanes and streets of the capital in happy expectation of Independence Day. Nevertheless, Georgetown is not Guyana, and like all capital cities, its inhabitants can

hardly be said to be representative of the whole country. There was, moreover, another pressing reason which urged me to leave Georgetown.

Just a week before, the greater number of the fourteen students who had followed the first course at Canefield House in Barbados had arrived back in Berbice—the north eastern coastal strip of Guyana—and I was anxious to meet them and see if the projects they had worked on while at Canefield House were being put into operation. The journey to Berbice along the long and broken road from the capital afforded an insight into the manner in which rural Guyana, and especially the area occupied by the East Indians, was celebrating Independence Day. Except at a few points where government offices were located there was no indication of the happy holiday mood which prevailed at Georgetown. In fact, in these areas black flags and large billboards with the inscription, "Independence, Yes, Celebrations, No!" frequently appeared along the route from Georgetown to Berbice.

My next stop was Port Mourant—whatever the name may indicate, it gives no impression of dying!—it is, in fact, the most thriving and largest East Indian settlement whose inhabitants are employed on one of the largest sugar estates in Guyana—Albion. On arriving there, it was a pleasure to meet our ex-students: John Foster, 26, a Catholic Negro mechanic who had just got off work from his factory; Denny Aga Khan, 31, a Moslem field surveyor, and three other East Indians, Herman Paul, an Anglican, and Budram Sreenarian and Nerian Swamny, both Hindus.

This group, hardly a week in Port Mourant after their three months course at Canefield House, Barbados, was already in action. In fact, a few days after their return, each one was asked to address public gatherings of their trade unions and civic associations. John Foster and Nerian Swammy have extended their activities beyond the limits of the work-place and local communities by preparing a plan for a Credit Union and co-operative stores in Black Bush Polder—a new development project for small farmers, in the Berbice.

Official Recognition

Georgetown was still in a festive mood when I returned to the city from Berbice on June 6th, and the illuminations were to light up the night in the capital all the following week. A visit to the Ministry of Education produced the happy result that the course at Canefield House is now recognised by this department of the Guyanese Government and teachers from Guyana will be given all facilities to follow the course at the Canefield Training Centre. It is an interesting fact, that whereas, in the Far East, former colonial territories after independence appear to draw most of their administrators from the legal profession, in the West Indies many a senior administrative officer has begun his public life in the teaching profession. Meanwhile, at the invitation of the Guyana Trade Union Council, I was able to meet the members of the executive committee and they recommended four of their members as candidates for the September, 1966, course at Canefield House.

It was time now to leave Guyana and begin a rapid tour of the Windward Islands which form a crescent across the lower half of the Caribbean Sea. All these islands, Trinidad, Grenada, St. Vincents, Carriacou (which belongs to the Grenadines), St. Lucia and Dominica are really summits of a submerged mountain chain and have a volcanic history.

On the flight to Trinidad, there was an interesting and very patriotic Venezuelan on the aircraft. He crowded the little window of the plane as it flew over the green forest carpet that comes down to the waters' edge of the Demerara River of Guyana, and pointed out what he called the real boundary between his country, Venezuela, and Guyana. He called everyone to witness that the most important problem which the newly independent Guyana has to face, is the boundary dispute ! Would, indeed, that this were the only problem which the country has to face ! Few countries, in fact, have acquired independence with so many and such serious problems and misgivings as the new Guyana—boundary disputes, racial tensions, economic insecurity and unemployment, to mention but a few.

Lack of Serious Effort

In fact, the first post-independence issues of the local Press, if their reports are to be trusted, underlined the lack of any serious effort, on the part of the country's leaders to lay the foundations of social peace and harmony in the new State. According to the local Press, the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition engaged in what may well be called a mud slinging contest. The Prime Minister, on the one hand, was reported to have openly called on Cheddi Jagan, the opposition Leader, to shed his Communist philosophy—one might as well call upon a leopard to change its spots. Jagan replied, as the Press reported, that the Prime Minister should shed his leaning on what he called, "Yankee Imperialism". Meanwhile a hapless people stood by mute and silent. Surely, the people of the new State have the right to expect something more constructive from the so-called leaders of the country? Surely, it is not beyond these leaders to put forward concrete, realistic and more constructive proposals if they sincerely desire to weld Guyana into a united country? Unfortunately, there were no signs of such an endeavour on the day after Guyana achieved independence. Is it any wonder that an uneasy "after independence, what?" remains an unanswered question in the minds of thousands of Guyanese?

Trinidad. Creeping Socialism or Marxist Socialism?

By the time the ardent Venezuelan had made known to all on the aircraft the claims of his country, the plane touched down at Piarco—the airport of Trinidad. The drive to San Fernando, in the south, runs along one of the most modern highways in the country — the Princess Margaret Highway. It skirts around one of the largest and oldest sugar concerns in the country—Caronis, an affiliate of the well known British sugar concern of Tate & Lyle. A few miles further, and not far from a small settlement which bears the picturesque Carib name of Carapichaima—such names are all that remains of these fine tribes that once occupied the island—rises a modern chemical plant, and soon the heavy oil-laden atmosphere warns you of the

approach of Poit-a-Pierre, where Texaco has one of its largest oil refineries in this part of the world.

If this refinery at Point-a-Pierre is, indeed, the largest in the Caribbean, the labour problems and unrest are of equal magnitude in the same area. On July 15, 1966, the *Nation*—the organ of the ruling People's National Movement—launched an all-out attack on the Texaco oil field workers' union (OWTU) and warned the country that the "Spectre of Marxism was haunting the trade union movement". The paper went on to say "This spectre is especially active among the oil field workers' trade union and also concentrating in the sugar belt". Was this warning issued by the organ of the ruling PNM merely an election stunt? There is a school of non-Marxist thought in Trinidad which believes that this is so. As proof they point to the Industrial Stabilisation Act, the Education Act and the Finance Bill of the PNM. Hence, it would appear that while the PNM may be sincere in its refusal of Marxist Socialism, it would itself favour the establishment of a type of Socialism not far different from that of Communism, one, in fact, which would be as unhealthy to the freedom of the individual as Marxism itself. It is significant that, when towards the end of June this year, Cheddi Jagan, that dentist become red politician of Guyana, visited Port of Spain he drew large audiences to hear him glorify the virtues of Communism. The results of the coming elections to be held in November should be an interesting indication as to the shape of the things to come in Trinidad.

Grenada, Carriacou, St. Lucia and Dominica—the deserted and underdeveloped islands.

Flying out from Piarco, it is just possible, on a clear day, and looking westwards to see the outline of the South American continent, and northwards, the islands which form a crescent almost encircling the Caribbean Sea—perhaps, the loveliest body of water in the world. In fact, this sea which is still haunted with memories of the pirates and buccaneers of the Spanish Main, of the slave trade, of the British Admirals Rodney and Nelson, is warm, usually calm and peaceful and always a beautiful dark blue. It is seldom troubled by bad weather, and yet, the Caribbean Sea is able

to spawn in a matter of minutes the most terrifying and devastating hurricanes! These giant howling winds have caused major disasters among the Windwards and have influenced the economic and social conditions of many communities on these islands. When Hurricane Janet struck Grenada eleven years ago, the nutmeg plantations were almost wiped out, and to secure quick returns many of these plantations were turned over to the cultivation of bananas. Even today, there is small hope that the very profitable nutmeg industry will be re-established in Grenada.

Nevertheless, hurricanes alone are not responsible for the under-development of the land and the weakness of the economy of these Windward Group of islands. It is common knowledge that within recent years there has been a steady drain of manpower from these islands to the more advanced countries of North America and the United Kingdom. Often the most able and intelligent individuals have deserted to build their fortunes in other lands. Perhaps, the most serious consequence of this is that an outward-looking mentality is being built up among the younger peoples. Among many, the greatest ambition is "to go overseas".

The effects of this mentality, on the development of these islands are there for any one to see. Schools needing teachers, hospitals in need of doctors and nurses, large tracts of land in need of people to work and develop these areas. Beyond the coastal strips in most of these Caribbean islands, are vast areas of plains and forests which still await some kind of development. In fact, while it may be true, in some measure, that the flight of man power from these areas is due to the lack of employment, nevertheless, there seems to be ample evidence to show that the real reason, more often than not, is the disinclination of these peoples to accept employment opportunities within their power and ability in their own islands. Perhaps, this attitude was best expressed by a group of workers who said, "It is far easier to drive a bus in London than cut cane!"

INDUSTRIAL ANGLE

In the Church's teaching on social affairs we can only expect a few firm principles to guide us. The application of the teaching to any concrete problem will always require a great deal of thought. Accepting principles still gives ample scope for differences of opinion as to their interpretation.

Catholic Social Doctrine

J. M. JACKSON

TO what extent is it possible for the Church to have a social doctrine, and what authority does that teaching carry? These questions may, at first, appear strange in view of the criticisms I made in a recent article of the attempts to denigrate papal social teaching. Nevertheless, they are questions which call for serious attention. Social and economic conditions are constantly changing. Is it possible to lay down absolute and unchanging rules for an ever changing situation? As for the authority of the Church's social teaching, this is obviously a question to be considered, because it is clearly impossible to regard every word of the social encyclicals, still less other pronouncements on social questions, as infallible.

Changing Situations

The fact that the environment in which we live is for ever changing does not necessarily preclude the formulation of rules of conduct of universal validity. No change in the pattern of social living can alter the fact that the deliberate taking of innocent human life is wrong. The moral law on this matter is quite unalterable: it is true for all places and all times — even though some of our "progressive" Catholics are prepared to go so far as to reject the traditional teaching of the Church regarding the point of time at which life begins.

What we must ask is whether there can be equally binding and universal moral laws in the social and economic sphere. I think we can. There is, however, a danger of confusion. A little reflection will show that the *prohibitions* of the moral law are usually cut and dried, whereas *positive obligations* are much less precise. We know what is meant by the Fifth Commandment, "Thou shalt not kill". It prohibits, not only the deliberate killing of an innocent person but a good many other things too. (We must never forget that the Ten Commandments given to Moses are no more than a concise codification of the moral law, which had existed from the beginning of time, and that exactly the same rules of conduct would be incumbent upon us if God had not given these commandments to Moses in this form. Moreover, they represent a summary of the moral law and must be interpreted as such: they may need qualification, as with the right to kill in self-defence, or elaboration.) But the Fifth Commandment does not only forbid us to harm our neighbour: implicit in this commandment is the positive obligation to love our neighbour. While it will be perfectly clear what we must not do which would harm our neighbour, it is far less clear what is required of us in the way of loving our neighbour. We have a duty to assist those less fortunate than ourselves, but what is the extent of this obligation, and how shall we fulfil it? We may give money to various charities? How much? Many charitable activities are only possible if people are willing to give their *time and effort* as well as money. How much of our time should we use in this way, and to which particular activities should we devote our efforts?

The Social Problem

When we are dealing with social and economic problems, we will far more often be dealing with positive obligations rather than mere prohibitions. For this very reason, our duty must be less precise. It is also necessary to recognise that there may be more than one way of fulfilling a positive obligation. The choice between these different means to an end may be just a matter of preference (one approach may be more in keeping with the cultural background of a

particular people) or a matter of technical efficiency. The Holy Father may tell us that we should do all in our power to solve the terrible problem of world hunger and malnutrition, above all by trying to ensure that more food is produced to feed the starving millions, but we should sit up and wonder what had happened if he went so far as to suggest that in some country a particular crop rotation or type of seed were adopted towards this end.

There are, of course, points at which it is difficult to draw the dividing line. Engineering techniques, crop rotations and the like as such are morally neutral and the Church has nothing to say about them. Forms of economic and social organisation are in part technical matters, and to this extent we are free to choose between them. On the other hand, they may also have a considerable impact on human life: there is a big difference in the pattern of life that is possible under communism, capitalism where ownership is highly concentrated, and a system where the ownership of property is widely spread through society. (The same may be said, though to a much lesser extent, of productive techniques. A dangerous method of production could not be justified unless the product were of real importance *and* no reasonably economic alternative method existed.)

The social teaching of the Church has always stressed the principle of subsidiarity. The state, it has maintained, should not undertake functions which could satisfactorily be performed by some lesser organisation. If we accept this principle, however, there is still ample scope for differences of opinion as to its interpretation. The principle *may* be a matter of Church doctrine, but the question of whether certain functions can be exercised effectively by a particular kind of organisation or whether it is best undertaken by the state is essentially a political judgment about the facts of the situation. Would it have been possible, in 1948, for example, to have found some means whereby the voluntary hospitals could have continued as such whilst rendering an improved service to the community or was it essential that they should have been taken over as part of a National Health Service? The Church has, in general, upheld the

right of individuals to the ownership not only of personal goods but also the means of production, but at the same time has recognised that there are some industries which are so important that they cannot be entrusted to private interests. Again, the principle is easily stated, but it does not get us very far when we are faced with the concrete problem of whether to nationalise the coal mines or steel or the big commercial banks.

Personal and Corporate Duties

There is a further distinction that needs to be made. The prohibitions of the moral law apply primarily to individuals. The individual is forbidden to kill, to steal, to lie, to commit adultery, and so on. However difficult the individual may find it to resist the temptation to do some of these things, it is always possible for him to do so. The positive obligations imposed upon us by the Church are only binding in so far as they can reasonably be carried out. Whilst we are always bound to keep the sabbath holy to the best of our ability, the specific requirement of doing so by attending Mass is only binding so long as we live within reasonable distance of a church. In normal circumstances, there is little or no difficulty in complying with the prohibitions of the moral law or with the positive obligations imposed on us by the Church.

In the social and economic field, this is far from the case. Take, for example, the housing problem. We all know the importance of good housing to family life and deplore the fact that many families lack adequate housing. It is all very well to lay down a rule that every family should be decently housed. No doubt, this should be the ultimate aim of our housing policies, but we must be realistic. We cannot, overnight, clear vast areas of slums and build the millions of houses that we need to give a home to all the homeless and to improve the lot of those who are now badly housed. A doctrine that outlines certain ideals to strive for may be invaluable, but all too often we shall have to struggle with the legacy of past mistakes. However much we deplore bad housing, we have to recognise that we need a great deal of time even to bring about a significant improve-

ment, let alone reach our ideal solution. The resources of the building industry are limited, and we cannot divert all its resources to housing, no matter how much we deplore the present situation. In the long run, good housing and all the other essentials of life depend upon a sound economy. Some of the building industry's resources must therefore go to building new factories which will contribute to our export trade, or bring jobs to areas where unemployment is another problem to be grappled with. In the social and economic sphere, therefore, we are, more often than not, facing extremely difficult practical problems—our immediate solutions are necessarily second best, and above all we are striving to get the right priorities between a number of pressing needs.

The Social Encyclicals

We must bear all this in mind in reading the social encyclicals. They have usually been issued in response to a particular need. *Rerum Novarum* appeared towards the end of the nineteenth century, when the evils of the Industrial Revolution had become apparent over a large part of Europe. One could hardly expect an encyclical issued in response to an obvious and pressing evil to limit itself to the statement of a few universally valid principles. Such principles will be found: stress on the essential dignity and worth of the human person and so on. Although it would probably be true to say that there is probably *nothing* in the encyclicals which could be regarded as an infallible statement, it is unreasonable to assume that therefore we can safely ignore their teaching. We must remember always that the infallible definition of a doctrine has usually been a response to the questioning of traditional teaching. In the social and economic sphere, what has occurred is not so much a questioning of doctrine but a widespread disregard of certain obligations.

In both *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno* the doctrine of the just wage is set out. But again, it is not easy to say precisely what the just wage is in any particular situation. Undoubtedly *Rerum Novarum* implied that many workers were being denied what was their due, and this

judgment of the Vicar of Christ is one that should have been carefully heeded. Nevertheless, we cannot say that in making this kind of judgment a pope could never be mistaken. However great the authority that might attach to a statement about the principle of a just wage, we can never envisage the translation of this into so many pounds per week as anything other than a matter for individual consciences. Nevertheless, we can hardly expect any thinking Christian to accept as just a situation in which some enjoy great riches whilst many live in abject poverty, nor should we expect the popes to remain silent in face of such a situation.

Of course, the encyclicals never criticised individual employers. It would not, of course, be appropriate in a document addressed to the universal Church, though in some instances it might not be inappropriate for individual bishops to particularise. But there is a more fundamental problem. No individual employer can be required in conscience to do more than is reasonably practicable. It is no use telling an employer that £15 a week is a just wage and that he is morally bound to pay this to all his workers if the only result is to drive him out of business and so put his workers out of a job and perhaps make their lot even harder. It may be that an individual employer is unable to pay a higher wage than is general in the industry. If the whole organisation of industry is wrong, there is a collective duty on those in charge of firms and trade unions and perhaps on others (bankers and others who provide credit for example) or on the state to find solutions. In the meantime, the obligations on the individual employer are limited.

In addition, the encyclicals do include some suggestions for reforms. The authority behind such suggestions is very much less than that behind the statements relating to moral principles or even moral judgments. Nevertheless, they should still command a substantial measure of respect. We may be sure that these suggestions are not just the inept ideas of one man without expertise in the field about which he is writing. No encyclical is likely to be the unaided work of the pope whose

signature it bears. He is likely to have studied the writings of many authorities and to have consulted others. Whilst we may sometimes differ from the encyclicals on certain points where reforms are suggested, it would be unwise to do so without first giving serious consideration to the view put forward by the encyclical.

Development in Social Teaching

There is a development in the social teaching of the Church quite different from that in any other sphere. There is not merely a deepening of understanding with the passage of time: there is the need to adapt the teaching of the Church to the new conditions that are constantly emerging. The medieval guilds may have been admirable, but it is no use in the twentieth century trying to restore features of an earlier economic system. The medieval urban economy, with many small masters in each craft, each employing a few apprentices and journeymen, may have been in conformity with Catholic social teaching but it is irrelevant to the modern world, where new techniques call for large scale production. We cannot put the clock back and sacrifice the benefits of large scale production and maintain an artificial system of small scale production. There have been some Catholics who have dreamed of doing just this, but the real task of those interested in Catholic social doctrine should be to try and mould our twentieth century economy with its large scale organisations in accordance with Christian principles. We may draw some lessons from the past, but on the whole we may have to try and build a radically different society.

The emphasis of social teaching will also change as one end is achieved and others come to take priority. Thus *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno* stressed the right of the workers to a just wage and to form trade unions to help them improve their lot. The British law on trade unions had already been changed to remove the earlier bans when *Rerum Novarum* first appeared. Subsequently, there has been general recognition throughout the free world of the right to form trade unions and this right has been embodied in the conventions of the International Labour Organisation.

If God has always existed, why can't matter have always existed too? Why does God allow material evils such as earthquakes? How can we believe that Christ was wholly man when he was sinless and we are not?

Any Questions?

WILLIAM LAWSON, S.J.

If God has always existed, why cannot matter (i.e. the universe) have always existed too?

I CAN only guess at what is behind your question. Are you asserting parity between the idea of God and the idea of a self-sufficient material universe? The materialists, who deny the existence of God, explain the existence of the universe by attributing to matter what we attribute to God—eternity and self-sufficiency. The universe does not need a creator, because matter was always there to account for everything that is. If that is the background of your question, I must tell you that it has great weaknesses. The universe as we know it is shown by all experience to be a complex of entities which are all dependent. The sum of all those dependencies, even if it had no beginning, cannot be independent. It is a whole order of dependence, and it supposes a higher independent reality.

If your question means that because the Creator is eternal his creation could also be eternal, you run into difficulties of another kind. The first is that you can't use the word "eternal" of God and of creation in one and the same sense, for there can be no real comparison between the infinite and the finite. The second difficulty is that matter is in a continuous process of change, and is therefore in time, which is simply the measure of change. But if you postulate time without a beginning you cannot explain the present state of the world. Why are we at this particular stage of material evolution and cultural development? Why has the human race not managed yet to reach the moon and the other planets? Why has not automation given us a

one-day working week? The time needed in the future for those achievements would already have been available in the past had the material universe not had a beginning.

Why does God allow material evils such as earthquakes, typhoons and tidal waves?

WONDER if you have limited your question to material evils because you think that moral evils are sufficiently explained by man's misuse of free will. Well, it is that same misuse which sufficiently explains the evils you ask about.

There is a mystery about the existence of any kind of evil. We explain sin as a misuse of the human freedom which makes man a person; but we cannot know why God did not ensure that man possessed his freedom without misusing it.

Material evil does depend on man and result from the evil in him. The Scriptures talk about the material universe waiting for the Messias and hoping for redemption. "The whole world groans and travails in pain", waiting for Christ. "The mountains will skip like rams" when he comes, and "the lion will lie down with the lamb". They all suffered a deterioration of their nature as the result of their dependence on man who himself had deteriorated. The return of man to the grace of God gives them hope of their own goodness.

That linking of the fates of man and the material world may seem to you far-fetched, and you may judge the scripture which so joins them to be unrealistic poetry. But consider how, in fact, man does affect the material world. He has tamed many species of animals, and he could domesticate others. He is tapping the energy of the atoms. He has made the tides work for him. What if man had not sinned? Suppose he had lived in peace, serving God and subjecting the earth to his rule: he could not have altered the earth's geological structure, but could he not have understood it so well that he could forestall volcanic explosions, typhoons and tidal waves and even make them serve him?

How can Roman Catholics believe that Christ is

wholly man and wholly God, seeing that man is sinful and Christ was not?

YOUR question is not so surprising, in view of the theories of some modern theologians (who ought to know better) tending in the same direction. They want to say that "Christ was like to us in all things", not adding the phrase "except sin" which up to now has always been included, which is still there in Scripture and in the authoritative teaching of the Church, and which the theories will never dislodge.

Man is not sinful by nature. His nature is the work of God, and therefore good. Sin is all his own work. To free himself from its toils he needs, not someone entangled as he is, but someone outside the snare. Christ, our High Priest, has no need to offer sacrifice for himself; but he can have compassion on our infirmities because he is fully human—more human than we are, in that his humanity is perfect.

I wonder how much the studied depreciation of Christ is breathed in unconsciously from the atmosphere of egalitarianism that swirls around us. There are feelings of resentment on account of God's bestowal of privileges on Our Lady — Immaculate Conception, Assumption, freedom from concupiscence. These days, privilege is out, and equality—or at least parity of esteem—is in. "Differentials" are unjust. The Blessed Virgin is no longer "our tainted nature's solitary boast" but someone whose difference from ourselves is due to favouritism.

We need to look again at the obvious: God is infinitely just; "the Spirit breathes where he will": "is your eye evil because I am good? Take what is yours and go your way." Our Lady's privileges gave her a task as well as a position of honour. She did not merit her privileges, but with them she made and merited a personality of unique strength and beauty.

How can God combine justice with mercy, which contradict one another?

THEY contradict one another only if you make them do so. If your definitions of justice and mercy are taken from a legal system, then justice means a strict application

of the law, and mercy is the exercise of a prerogative that saves a guilty person from the rigours of the law. So, a jury brings in a verdict of guilty but with a recommendation to mercy, the judge pronounces sentence according to the law, but he passes on the recommendation to a minister acting for the sovereign, and the minister decides whether to reduce, remit or confirm the sentence. The recommendation to mercy might be equivalently a statement that the law is faulty and its application in this case would be unjust. Justice and mercy are then complementary, and both are needed to achieve the purpose of the lawgiver. Courts of equity have the same end in view—to prevent injustices arising from legal justice.

In God, justice and mercy are nothing else but his infinite love. It is right to see God—the Scriptures do it—as the judge who rewards or punishes man according to his works; but the Scriptures also tell us that the justice of God is the holiness of God. As God is perfect, so we are called to be perfect; and it is God who enables us to respond to that call. Justice, or justification, is the goodness given us by Christ. Justice in our legal sense would be the end of us:

If thou, O Lord, shouldst mark iniquities,
Lord, who could stand?

God's justice is the effective sanctifying of the world, and it means, for us, the gift of all that we need and that we do not deserve—forgiveness, mercy, compassion: in short, salvation.

Approaches

Read the *Pax* document (report by the Cardinal Primate of Poland on the Communist plan to infiltrate the Church in Poland and France); also *Pax and Slant*; and *The Great Liberal Death Wish* by Malcolm Muggeridge—in *Approaches* No. 7. From G. Lawman, 50 Crockford Park Road, Addlestone, Surrey. 3s. post free.

THE CHURCH AT WORK

Love in Action: 3

Credit Unions and The Church

J. VAN DEN DRIES

The African Continent

Let us now turn our gaze to the African Continent. From the 5th-11th December, 1965, the *fourth* African Conference on Mobilisation of Local Savings was held in Nairobi, Kenya. The very fact that this was the *fourth* of such conferences, proves that there is a growing awareness in Africa about the need to mobilise local savings. The Conference was attended by some 70 delegates from 8 African countries. Among the delegates were five priests, three Sisters and at least 30 Catholic laymen and women. In Africa two missionaries have spearheaded the movement which can now boast of 400 Credit Unions duly registered in various African countries.

Basutoland

Basutoland has a flourishing Credit Union Movement. The number of registered Credit Unions is at least 30; many others are on trial and will be registered when proved sound and efficient.

It was the Catholic University of Roma, Basutoland (now the University of Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland) which organised courses on co-operatives and Credit Unions through its Extension Department headed by Rev. Dr. Brossard and assisted by several African specialists trained at the Coady International Institute, Antigonish, Nova Scotia, Canada.

Cameroons

Two Mill Hill priests, Fathers Jansen and Barnicle, have introduced the Credit Union movement in the West Cameroons. They have now organised two Credit Unions. They devised an ingenious scheme of fixed savings per week

according to promises made by members who agree to save either 100, 50, 25 or 10 francs a week.

Ghana

Father John McNulty is responsible for the introduction of the Credit Union movement into Ghana. The first Credit Union was started at Jirapa, north-west Ghana among the Dagarti people, the great majority of whom are illiterate peasant farmers.

Things may be plentiful in cities like Accra and Kumasi and among the Ashanti but in the dry savannah of the northern region the families live in very poor and trying conditions. Father McNulty started in the right way by a ten months' preparation of regular weekly meetings. The people had realised that the key man was the treasurer. So they elected the priest as the first treasurer. But the good priest, in turn, insisted on a vice-treasurer being appointed to help him. Knowing that the Credit Union, as indeed any co-operative, stands or falls by its educational programme, the Father insisted on a general meeting every 6 weeks. In other countries they will not allow a person to join unless he has followed a number of lessons. A wise precaution against gross ignorance. Out of the Credit Union's savings the people bought a corn mill, set up a consumers' co-operative store. Some attention was given to better houses and improved homes. In northern Ghana the introduction of the Credit Union movement is compared to the introduction of the gospel message by the White Fathers in 1929. That is why Mission Sunday, October 1956, was observed as Credit Union Day. In 1957 an African priest was sent to Antigonish. He was the Rev. Peter Poriku Dery, since then made the first Bishop of the diocese of Wa. Since then the movement has gone forward. The numerous Credit Unions (more than 20) have now been formed into a Credit Union League.

Kenya

In Kenya too, the Credit Union movement was introduced by missionaries, who have been encouraged by Father Paul Crane, S.J. At the coast Sister Rose, a White Sister, Father

P. Leady (Holy Ghost priest), and Father Isidore Onyango (a diocesan priest) are active in the movement. In the Machakos area Father Tom O'Brien, Holy Ghost priest, has organised the flourishing Vya Co-operative Credit Society near Emali among poor and illiterate peasant farmers in an area often struck by drought conditions. It was registered on 8th December, 1964, with a share capital of 190/-. This capital grew steadily: 7/2/65—838/-; 24/4/65—1,402/-; 18/5/65 — 2,527/-; 13/6/65 — 3,783/-; 18/7/65 — 5,364/-; 31/8/65—8,485/-. By 31st December, 1965, the members, now numbering 200, had saved 15,000/-. Loans at that date amounted to 10,000/- mostly related to improved agriculture but increasingly also to improved housing. Father O'Brien has devised ingenious visual aids to explain the working of their Credit Union. Songs and plays have been composed on the essential elements of their Credit Union. Plans are on foot to make a film centered around this well organised Credit Society.

In the West of Kenya Father Van Diepen, Mill Hill priest, and a number of African laymen sent to Antigonish, Canada, have spearheaded the movement. The Social Guild of Kenya has organised several seminars on Credit Unions, separately and in conjunction with the Department of Co-operatives. Such seminars were held at Kitale, Mombasa and Nairobi. The Moderator of the Social Guild, Rev. Father Dr. J. Van den Dries, published a Credit Union Handbook, in the *Christian Order Series*. As a result of these efforts Kenya now numbers 25 registered Credit Unions. More are in the process of formation. In consultation with Mr. Jack Dublin, Senior Credit Union Specialist, seconded by C.U.N.A. to the CUNA/AID programme in East Africa, an African will soon be appointed as field officer. His task will primarily be to federate the existing Credit Unions into a Credit Union League. This project is sponsored jointly by CUNA International and Catholic Relief Services in Nairobi.

Nigeria

Nigeria can boast of a very flourishing Credit Union movement introduced again by the Missionaries. In 1965 the number of registered Credit Unions was 284. The Co-

operative College at Ibadan runs courses on Credit Unions, trains Credit Union inspectors, auditors and field workers. The Registrar of Co-operatives registers new Credit Unions according to Nigerian Law, provides auditors, field officers and itinerant secretaries.

It is a very good set-up and great stress is laid on proper training. Most Credit Unions in Western Nigeria are small with an average of less than 50 members. They want it so, for they feel that a Credit Union will work only when each member personally knows all other members. Many of these Credit Unions are among the illiterate people of rural areas. They need of course at least one person trained to keep the books. Some of the Credit Unions demand compulsory monthly savings. Many of these Credit Unions were started by the missionaries.

Fathers Burke and Toner have introduced the Credit Union into Northern Nigeria around the town of Kaduna. In Father Toner's parish there is a thriving multi-purpose co-operative based on the Credit Union. A lay-volunteer from Ireland helps the priest and the co-operative. Social workers from Germany help to train the women. Both Father Toner and Father Burke help the people to solve their social and economic problems. Each has his own approach. Father Burke undertakes small projects at a slow pace of training community leaders. Father Toner believes in starting projects and training the leaders as they go along. Another dozen priests in various parts of Nigeria around Onitsha, Mahurdui, Ogoja and Enugu are active in encouraging their people to start co-operatives and Credit Unions.

Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone's 2½ million inhabitants can boast of a widespread and colourful co-operative movement. The women in their coloured robes with a special pattern designed for members of their co-operatives and dyed by themselves offer an unforgettable spectacle. Most of the co-operative societies are marketing societies. There are a very large number of Thrift and Savings Societies which often insist on compulsory monthly savings. In spite of these it was estimated

recently that about 3 million pounds of local savings were hidden away and not mobilised in one way or another.

Credit Unions à la Cuna numbered last year only four. Negotiations have been going on between C.U.N.A., U.S./AID and the Departments of Co-operatives about technical assistance in the form of a teacher at Kenema Co-operative College and of a couple of field organisers to train, supervise and control existing co-operatives, and Credit Societies. For in most African countries, lack of trained officials is the greatest obstacle to a sound and efficient movement. Everything should be done to get more trained officials. Priests, particularly in the northern part of the country, are now beginning to take an active interest in this very wide co-operative movement. As a result a few more groups are now forming themselves into Credit Unions.

Tanzania.

The United Republic of Tanzania and Zanzibar has to date 75 Credit Unions. The Government has declared the Credit Union development as part of its Five Year Development Plan. The aim is to establish 400 Credit Unions by 1969. On 27th June, 1964, Mr. J. S. Kasambala, Minister of Commerce and Co-operatives, addressed the newly founded Credit Union League of Tanzania with these words: "They are obviously here to stay and in our Five Year Development Plan we hope to have 400 of them registered throughout the United Republic, in order to encourage thrift, to save our buried treasure from insects, and to protect our urban wage earners from the various sharks all too eager to gobble up their meagre earnings."

The tendency in Tanzania is to separate Credit Unions from other Co-operative Societies which primarily deal with produce.

Of the 75 active Credit Unions altogether 59 have been sponsored by the Catholic Missionaries. The White Fathers at their Social Training Centre, Nyegesi, near Mwanza have trained many Credit Union specialists, with the help of a CUNA expert from the U.S.A., Mr. Norman Riley. Also Father Richard LeClair, a Holy Ghost priest, organised a number of Credit Unions around the town of Moshi at the

foot of Mount Kilimanjaro. At present 39 Credit Unions have been federated into the Tanzania Credit Union League whose president is Mr. Joseph Mutayoba who was sent by the Catholic Bishop to Antigonish to study Credit Unions. Mr. Mutayoba, who is now working in the Social Department of the Catholic Secretariat at Dar-es-Salaam, has by his zealous and steady efforts spear-headed the Credit Union movement in his country. The Tanzanian Credit Union League at the end of 1965 numbered 39 Credit Unions which have over 5,700 members and assets of about 752,000 shillings.

Growing pains are acutely felt in the co-operative movement of Tanzania. These growing pains are the result of vast and rapid expansion of the number of Societies and a corresponding lack of trained officials. However, all recognise that the solution to this problem is expansion of proper training facilities at the Social Training Centre of Nyegesi, a private training centre, at the Co-operative Education Centre in Moshi run by the Co-operative Union of Tanzania, to which Mr. Jack Dublin of CUNA is seconded and at the Government sponsored Tanzania Co-operative College, also in Moshi.

Uganda

The story in Uganda tells us of 30 registered Credit Unions and of many more groups which are awaiting registration. The story started in Masaka when a Catholic teacher, Mr. Remigius Kintu was sent by his Bishop to the Social Training Centre of Nyegesi, Mwanza. When he returned to Uganda he organised the Masaka Teachers' Thrift and Loan Co-operative Society. Others were sent to Nyegesi to learn about Credit Unions. Several African priests are now helping them to start Credit Unions. The Government policy at the present time appears to be one of encouraging Credit Unions as single purpose co-operative societies among wage or salary earners only. In the rural areas the policy is to organise Thrift Societies within existing marketing societies that are participating in the so called "co-operative Credit Scheme".

French Speaking Africa

We have not mentioned all English speaking African countries in which Credit Unions were set up by Catholic lay-people. We have selected the more prominent examples. If we now turn our attention to French speaking African countries, we find that in many of them there are "Mutualités", i.e. insurance organisations and also "Caisses d'épargne" i.e. Savings Banks. Several of the "Mutualités" or insurance schemes aiming to help the people to repay funeral costs have been founded by priests. But the "Caisses d'épargne" have not been started by the Missionaries. Credit Unions as Savings and Credit Societies do not exist in French speaking African countries. Les Caisses populaires or les Caisses d'économie of Canada have not penetrated the African continent.

In the Congo, in Burundi, in Rwanda, in Dahomey and Togo for example you do not find such Credit Societies. It is hoped that CUNA International will lend its help now that its attention has been drawn to this large virgin field. For no doubt Credit Unions can bring to these territories the same benefits as they are bringing to other African peoples.

Conclusion

This sketch is a poor tribute to the many missionaries (many unmentioned) who introduced the Credit Union Movement into many areas of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, the parts of the world where poverty is rather the rule than the exception. To pay full tribute to their fraternal active love a book would be needed.

One reason why the Missionaries back the Credit Union Movement is that it helps the people to keep out of the clutches of the usurer who loans to needy people at exorbitant rates of interest. This is particularly so in the poorer countries of Asia and Africa where Credit facilities via banks are not open to the poor. This promotion of the Credit Union Movement by the representatives of the Church is a most convincing way of showing to the world that the Church is a true Mother, deeply concerned with all the needs of men, also with the need of economic freedom.

If then Catholic priests and laymen take an active interest in the Credit Union Movement it is primarily for the simple reason of helping the people to help themselves. In the early days of missionary activity people brought their savings to the priest who would keep it safe for them. The people, Christians and non-Christians alike, had great confidence in the priests. In those days it was practically impossible for the people to go and deposit money at the Post Office or any other Bank. Such institutions were not found in vast tracts of the rural areas. With the economic and social changes of the last decade, it was quite natural that many a priest felt that the old system of bringing their savings to the priest for safety was too paternalistic and that the people should learn that they themselves should take care of their savings in Credit Unions which is a modern way and up-to-date method. Besides a Credit Union, while serving its primary purpose as an economic Society, brings in its wake other good fruits. It cannot fail to inculcate a Christian humanism by which all men are brothers under one Father who is in heaven, by which members are aware of their personal human dignity, by which they learn mutual respect and service, by which they have the feeling of belonging. In short the Credit Union way is the modern way of living according to the principles of the Gospel, according to the example of the first Christians. Cardinal Suhard wrote: "One cannot be a saint and live the gospel we preach without spending oneself to provide everyone with the housing, employment, goods, leisure, education, etc., without which life is no longer useful". Indeed the Credit Union way of assisting people to help themselves is a safer and more effective way of helping one's neighbour than giving alms, free meals, free shelter which automatically puts the receiver in the position of an inferior.

The Credit Union can be a help to bridge the chasm between the Church and secular society. It certainly is a help to heal the ravages caused by the "divorce" of man's religious convictions from his daily life and occupations.

Book Review

THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD

God's Grace in History by Charles Davis; Fontana paperback (Collins), 5s. **Images of Authority** by J. M. Cameron; Compass Book (Burns & Oates), 10s. 6d.

I FOUND *God's Grace in History* of great interest. It contains the three Maurice Lectures, which Charles Davis gave at King's College, London in January and February, 1966. By a somewhat wry coincidence the first copies of this book arrived at the publishers on the very day its author announced so suddenly his intention of renouncing his priesthood and his Catholic Faith. The book itself is published under an *imprimatur*. Though not signifying positive approval of a book's contents, this does mean that it is considered free from moral and doctrinal error. Davis, then, can be safely read, but I would go much further than this and say it fully deserves to be read, if only for what its author has to say with such point and clarity of the interrelationship between grace and nature within human society. His chapter on "Sacred and Holy" I found the best in his book. Equally good is his summary of the Church's mission, its place in the world of today, in his book's closing pages. These are both splendid examples of Davis at his lucid best.

It would be incorrect, I think, to describe Charles Davis as England's leading Catholic theologian, churlish to deny that he is gifted with a wonderful power of theological exposition, which made much of what he wrote as a Catholic a real joy to read. At the same time, there is a certain slickness about his latest piece of writing which could well be the product of a desire, subconsciously felt, to cover up a certain immaturity and lack of experience. I am inclined to think that this is indeed the case. Due allowance, of course, has to be made for the necessity every good lecturer is under of keeping his subject-matter compact and its presentation crystal clear. Even so, Davis strikes me as a

little too self-assured in these lectures. Exactly the opposite effect is produced by a reading of what Professor J. M. Cameron had to say in his Terry Lectures at Yale in 1964. They are very good indeed. One can feel in his pages not only the weight of much learning, but of learning set against a background of the kind of mature reflection and experience, which I do not find in Davis.

Take, for example, his concept of what he calls "cultural faith" as something whose disappearance is not to be mourned because too embedded in local culture and untrue "to the meaning of faith as a free, genuinely personal response to God". With great respect, I would say this is the kind of opinion I would expect from a rather immature seminary professor, a man of books who has rarely moved amongst ordinary people, observing them at work and play and prayer. I have done so now for a good many years in a good many countries. As a result, I am quite convinced personally that, though the faith of ordinary folk is not intellectual in Davis' sense of the word, which is that of a seminary professor, it is nevertheless, made with the intellect and, thereby, a genuinely personal response to God. There is, indeed, no reason that I can think of why the ordinary man's response to God should not be assisted by and, even, enshrined in the culture and customs of his native land, its history, the whole environment of his daily living. Far from downgrading his faith as somehow impure because assisted by these factors, I would, in fact, expect it to be fostered in this fashion. Man is not a dessicated calculating machine; but a human being possessed of a body as well as a soul, living his life in human fashion in a certain place at a certain time. I would, therefore, expect the virtue of faith to enlighten his understanding and strengthen his personal response to God precisely through the homely things that the habit of centuries has placed round himself and his people. To look down on him because so assisted is not merely to show immaturity, but to be guilty, it seems to me, of intellectual snobbery.

Again, take a statement like this one on page 88: "In a difficult situation the Church is sometimes tempted to com-

promise its mission in order to save its institutional existence. To do so is to betray Christ. Its permanence as a visible community has in fact been guaranteed. All the more reason why it should not fear to risk its own survival when the end for which it exists demands this". The implication here, I think it true to say, is that compromise for Davis means failure to confront injustice and denounce it. This, of course, is not true, but it is precisely the point of view that is bred by immaturity and inexperience of actual and extremely difficult situations that representatives of the Church have always had to face and still have to face in many parts of the world today. Any number of examples can be given.

Along with most others at the time, I was in admiration of the stand taken by Bishop (then, Father) Huddleston in South Africa several years ago. I am in equal admiration of the less dramatic, but equally firm stand taken by Archbishop Hurley of Durban. I notice that Bishop Huddleston has gone (been kept out) from South Africa, but that Archbishop Hurley is still at his post. Both are known as opponents of the regime's apartheid policies. Who is to say that the form of protest chosen by the one is to be preferred to that of the other? He would be a foolhardy and rather arrogant man who set out to do so. He would be a very foolish man who set out to generalise as to how the Church should conduct herself in every case of this sort. Is this what Davis is trying to do? Is he actually falling—in a field outside the scope of his theological knowledge—for the attitude of a Canon Collins, which would appear to classify as a betrayal of principle all action against injustice short of screaming protest? Is this what he means by compromise, not the failure to take a stand against tyranny; but the failure to do so in a fashion approved of by himself? There could be no greater sign of immaturity than this.

Many times in her history the Church has had to tolerate injustice and tyranny in order to preserve the possibility of continuing her mission. This is what the great Cardinal of Poland, for example, is doing at the moment. It is what the present Vatican policy in Eastern Europe implies with

its attempt to work out agreements with Russia's former satellite States. To interpret the stance adopted at present by the Polish Cardinal as compromise by the Church of its mission for the sake of preserving its institutional existence, is to reveal not merely an ignorance of what is at stake, but an almost totally immature outlook as to the measures best calculated to preserve it.

The sort of criticism that should be pointed in the direction of quite a number of the Church's representatives in the world today is not that some of their number have come to terms with untruth in order to save their own skins and that of the institutional Church. It is, rather, that the failure of too many of their number to encourage responsible lay action has allowed untruth to rise up and dominate whole peoples. These are asleep as the Hierarchy of Cuba was asleep when Castro was in the hills, poised to strike for Havana. I can understand how it is that the Cuban Bishops can do practically nothing now. What I find hard to forgive is their past inactivity, which has placed them in a position where now they can do nothing. To rail at them for not getting eyeball to eyeball with Castro now is more or less foolishness. Not to recognise the relationship between their failure in pre-Castro days and the futility of their present position, is to show oneself quite unable to learn the lessons of history. I am not too inclined to blame the German Hierarchy for their failure to confront Hitler *after* he had achieved supreme power. I do blame them for the share in his rise to that power insofar as it can be traced, as I think it can, to the failure of the German Bishops to encourage dedicated young German laymen to play a responsible part in the public life of their country and permeate it with Christian values. Had young Christian laymen of principle been active, as they should have been, in pre-Hitler Germany, Hitler himself might never have come to power. The same can be said of a good many developing countries today. Representatives of the Church have a lesson to learn here. Many are still too slow to learn it.

Paul Crane, S.J.